

fore still exercise an influence. Mr. Parlane said, "In your paper you refer to the item of rent as a minor factor in the cost of production. How do you arrive at that conclusion?" Well, we regard rent as a minor factor in the cost of production, because in most cases in the industries we are writing about the rent is a comparatively small item as compared with wages and the cost of raw materials. Mr. Nash asked whether I suggest that distribution and production methods are not matters for the consideration of this Conference. I have attempted to lump the matters which I think this Conference should deal with, or make any suggestions with regard to which would fit in with any desire to co-ordinate the subjects we should consider. Then come some questions by Mr. Kennedy. The first is, "You suggest that unless mutually agreed to by assessors there should be no reference to the Court. What penalty do you propose should be on the employers who will not agree to a reference of a dispute to the Court of Arbitration?" I do not suggest there should be any penalty; neither do I suggest there should be any penalty on workers who do not agree to the reference to the Court. To-day the workers have the option, and I suggest the employers should have the same option in the future that the workers have had in the past. The next question is, "You say that unions convicted of breaches of awards and agreements should be deregistered. What do you propose shall happen to the thousands of employers who have, or may be, convicted of same offences?" I pointed out that the penalties against employers for breaches of awards, or of the Arbitration Act, are enforceable to-day, but there are no such enforceable penalties against organized labour. I am not suggesting that any of the penalties provided by the present Act should be removed, and I think they are quite sufficient to keep the employer pretty well within the confines of the straight and narrow path. Mr. Kennedy added that I suggested the repeal of the Labour Disputes Investigation Act, and he asked me, "Do you mean by that that you are prepared to scrap all agreements now in existence under this Act between employers and unions?" My answer is "No; that would have to be provided for, of course." Then Mr. Cornwell asked, "If arbitration is to be optional, will you agree to strikes and lockouts being legal, and the parties to have full, free use of the actions usually adopted during the period of the strike?" Of course, as I have already indicated, the strike or lockout would be legalized in the event of a dispute proving incapable of settlement and either side refusing to refer it to the Court. As to agreeing to the parties having full, free use of the actions usually adopted during the period of the strike, I am not prepared to endorse that. There must be some restrictions on the parties in the interests of the community, as has been found necessary in England recently, where the Trades Disputes Act of 1906 had to be very extensively amended by the Act passed last year. "Admitting the depression at the present time," asks another speaker, "can he give specific instances of bankruptcy or of employers going out of business through the operations of the Court or the minimum wage?" In reply I may say that there is nothing in my paper to show that I regard the minimum wage as a cause of bankruptcy. Wages are only one factor in the case. I think it was Mr. Purtell's question, and if he wants a direct answer, it must be, "No; I cannot tell him of one case of a man becoming bankrupt through the Court fixing a minimum wage." Mr. Bromley asked me, "Would your proposal for penalties preclude the assistance of a strong union of workers being given to a weaker union handicapped in the settlement of a dispute by an employer who has not yet joined the ranks of those who are prepared to recognize trade-unionism?" Mr. Brechin has disclaimed any responsibility for me, and I will take the same line and disclaim any responsibility for him. Mr. Polson asked me if the sentence beginning in the first line of page 132, "The Arbitration Court does exercise a restraining influence upon the sheltered industries," does not seem to contradict the statement at the bottom of the page, "The system does not prevent, though it may be an influence against, the making of agreements between employers and their employees contrary to public interest." I do not think that the two statements are in conflict. Both statements are complete, and both are correct. The Arbitration Court does exercise a restraining influence upon the sheltered industries in some degree, but not sufficient to prevent entirely agreements between employers and employees which inflict hardship upon other industries. Another question is on very much the same lines as one I have already dealt with in regard to penalties being inflicted upon employers. It is the same question, and I give exactly the same answer.

*Mr. Nash:* Would you read my question?

*Mr. Bishop:* Your question is, "Mr. Bishop says 'The penalty for a union convicted of a serious breach of an award or agreement should be deregistration, depriving the union of all rights under the Act—the right to collect fees, the right to enter into collective agreements.' What corresponding penalty would he inflict on employers and employers organizations?" I have already pointed out in my paper that the object of the arbitration system was to give the unions certain privileges and impose on them in return certain responsibilities. If the union honestly accepts its responsibilities and endeavours to carry on the industry peacefully and effectively, no penalties are required; but if the union refuses its responsibilities, then it should be deprived of the privileges. The whole of this Act is designed in the interests of the workers, and privileges are given to the workers and the unions. I do not think any corresponding privileges are given to the employers, and therefore there is nothing to deprive them of. But you have many penalties provided by the Act which force employers to comply with its provisions and with the awards of the Court; and I think those penalties are sufficient. There are other questions that I have not time to deal with now; but I will be pleased to answer them in committee, or to delegates privately.

*Mr. Revell:* I would like to know your answer to Professor Murphy.

*Mr. Bishop:* I think I can answer Professor Murphy by a well-known quotation, "Thou art the man."

*Professor Murphy:* I do not want to reply, but I want to say that statement is absolutely untrue.